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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

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Economical Ways of Keeping the House Warm ★
An interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. S. H. McCrory, Bureau of Agricultural Engineering, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate stations, Tuesday, January 10, 1933.

MISS VAN DEMAN: How do you do, Everybody?

Last week you remember, Dr. Faith Williams gave us some very practical points on working out the family budget for 1933! One of the budget items that's bothering a lot of us right now is the coal bill or the oil or wood bill -- in other words the cost of keeping the house warm these January days. So I went over and consulted the agricultural engineers. And today, Mr. McCrory, the chief of that bureau, is here to give us his help.

Mr. McCrory, I'm going to take you at your word and start right in. What do you think are the best ways of reducing fuel bills and yet keeping the house comfortable.

MR. MCCRORY: Well, Miss Van Deman, first I'd say, heat only the rooms in actual use. If fuel is scarce, it's better to keep a few rooms comfortably warm than merely to take the chill off the whole house. This may seem like harking back to the old days when one room was like the tropics and another like the arctic regions. Now, we've grown so used to the idea of heating every room that lots of us don't realize how much fuel we can save in an emergency by cutting off a room or two upstairs and hanging a heavy curtain across the hallway or over a door to stop drafts. Of course, take care that radiator pipes don't freeze. During a very cold snap, tie blankets or a thick layer of newspapers around radiators in unheated rooms.

Now, another way to conserve heat is to stop up the leaks through cracks and around doors and windows.

Of course, the ideal time to put on weather stripping is in the summer or fall. And the ideal weather strips are of metal, or wood, or good grade felt. But in an emergency, cheap felt stripping quickly put on with a few tacks will do a lot of good.

MISS VAN DEMAN: I have an ingenious friend who couldn't manage even weather stripping, so she made narrow bags of unbleached muslin just the width of her windows, and filled them with sand. She laid these long sandbags on the window sills and at the joining of the upper and lower sash. They were very inconspicuous and they stopped a lot of cold drafts.

Also, I've noticed that simply pulling the shades clear down below the sills and drawing the curtains all the way over the windows on cold winter evenings helps to keep a room warmer.

(over)

MR. McCORRY: Yes, good practical ideas, both of those. The shades and curtains of course act as insulators. Storm doors and storm windows are another application of that same principle. Even a storm door knocked together from scrap lumber or a packing box and covered with roofing paper may save a lot of fuel.

A man who is handy with tools may also find it worth while to put thresholds at the bedroom doors. Then when the bedroom windows are open at night, cold air won't leak under the doors into the main part of the house.

An open fireplace chimney is another place where heat escapes when there's no fire on the hearth. If the chimney has a damper, be sure to close it when the fireplace is not in use. Or get a wooden panel made of two or three boards tacked together, to fit up into the throat of the chimney.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. McCrory, so far we've talked about ways of keeping heat in and cold out of the house. Can you give us any suggestions on managing the heating equipment itself?

MR. McCORRY: Yes, for one thing, see that the chimney and the smoke pipe are clean and give a good draft, and that dampers are in order. Then you can force your fire or check it, as you wish.

A chimney can be inspected from the bottom by removing the smoke pipe and holding a mirror in the opening. Generally the best way to clean a chimney is for a man to get up on the roof and swab it with a sack of straw weighted with a brick or some other heavy object. The dirt from a smoke pipe may be brushed out. When the smoke pipe is put back into the chimney see whether it fits tightly. Cracks may be filled with ordinary clay, if there's nothing better at hand.

The grates in the stove or furnace also need watching. When they become warped or broken, good unburned fuel falls through and is lost in the ashes. To avoid overheating and warping the grates, keep the ash pit clean. And of course a fire burns better when the ashes are raked down so there's a draft underneath. In an emergency a piece of sheet iron with holes punched in it may be wired loosely over a broken grate, to conserve fuel. And here again, ordinary clay will stop up leaks around the ash pit.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. McCrory, what about the choice of fuels to burn? Can you give us any pointers on that?

MR. McCORRY: That's a question which depends so much on local supplies that I can't answer very definitely. Ton for ton the low grades of coal have about as much heating value as the better grades, but they are oftentimes dirty and difficult to burn in the house furnace and stoves. Dampening soft coal before it is put into the bin and again before it is shovelled onto the fire helps to keep down smoke and dust. Also when burning these low grade fuels give careful attention to the fire. Put on only small quantities of the soft coal at a time and be careful not to smother the fire. Shake the fire frequently or break up the crust with a poker.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Just this one more question, Mr. McCrory. Suppose a family is lucky enough to be planning a house and is trying to decide on the type of heating system to install. Could you send them information.

MR. McCORRY: Yes, we have a bulletin in press now giving the general principles

of house heating and explaining the advantages of different types of equipment. It will be on sale for 5 cents a copy by the Superintendent of Documents of the Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

MISS VAN DEMAN: We'll be watching for the new bulletin on Heating the Farm Home. And thank you, Mr. McCrory, for coming over today.

Next week, Miss Ruth O'Brien will be here to talk about choosing household textiles on the retail counter.

Goodbye for this time.

